AmigaMCCC News
Fort Worth Dallas
May 2001

Gateway 2001

Amiga in the 21st Century

The Gateway Amiga show for 2001 gave attendees many firsts, a few suprises, and the usual Amiga fun. This year I got to drive to St. Louis. A first for me, which resulted in 24 hours behind the wheel for the round trip. At least I know I can do it now! Bob Scharp put together another show that will be long remembered for what I got to see and do.

Saturday morning started with a keynote speech from Merlancia. Their biggest announcement concerned their group of new Amigas which includes a laptop with a stainless steel case. A small mix-up on the next speaker gave us a trip down memory lane for Amiga users. He did an admirable job considering he had no chance to prepare.

From there it was off to the show floor. The "firsts" really picked up there. I saw Dave Haynie and Leo Schwab for the first time. Nearby, one table contained what might be the secret to success for any Amiga show... free beer, and lots of it. This was later followed by free pizza, the most I've ever seen! All of this was part of the Petro farewell party given on the show floor.

As far as what the vendors had to show, there seemed to be a deficit in the exciting category, but that is to be expected. The biggest thing I saw, in terms of excitement, came in the form of a PC on a card from Mr. Hardware. I spotted it after seeing what appeared to be DVD movie playing on an Amiga. Further examination showed it to be a complete PC on a card. The card featured a 700MHz Celeron, 3D graphics, stereo sound, USB, PS2, IDE controller, networking, two DIMM sockets, and more that I'm forgetting for $495. There is also a lower priced version with some of the features reduced. I watched as it switched between the Amiga screens and Windows screen while running applications on each OS simultaneously. All sorts of possibilities opened up to me with this card in place. Network the two together and they share everything even more. Merlancia provided the largest booth at the show. One end of the booth featured some parphenalia from Commodore's past, including a gold C-64, the 1,000,000th unit from December 5, 1986. Many of the vendors had the new PCI card expansion that is currently showing up for the 1200. I was suprised by how many there were.

There were some notable absences from this years show. Anti-Gravity and their BoXeR did not make an appearance, although Joe Torre was there. Last year Mr. Torre joined the Anti-Gravity team, but didn't appear to be representing them this year. There were no major software announcements this year, though SoftLogik came through with a PageStream 4.0 upgrade, and SuperBase Pro showed up in updated form, fixing 3.5 and 3.9 bugs.

As I looked around the show floor, I took notice of the number of people I had seen previously at this show, and I thought of just how powerful the Amiga is. Here are all of these people seemingly dedicated to a 16 year old computer which has spent 7 years waiting for something to happen... and they still keep right on thinking, AMIGA.

Saturday night took us to the much anticipated banquet. Publicity on the Internet for the banquet promised some real startling news for those who attended. The banquet always starts off with a meal, which seems to be a hit or miss propisition. I liked the pizza available earlier in the day. The meal was a little on the boring side. The next event, Petro's Roast, will always be a very memorable moment for me. In a word, it was hilarious. If you ever get a chance to see it on video, DO. Every moment was charming, right from the moment that we found out that Petro had no idea what a roast was, and was a bit worried as to what was involved — 'til the last words from Petro, promising to be there next year.

Next up, Bill McEwen. He had a steep hill to climb to outdo Petro's Roast. The anticipation of his announcement seemed to be pretty high all day. His announcement of the AmigaOS being ported to the PowerPC and becoming AmigaOS 4.0 seemed to bring confusion. Some were excited, some were confused, and some seemed to be shocked. His announcement was later followed by an official clarification of what it meant. I guess I was paying too close attention, as I understood right away, so I found it a bit strange that so many people seemed to be confused by what it meant. The most obvious thought being that Amiga was changing course again. This show marked my forth trip to the show. On my first, I was told the AmigaOS was to be based on QNX. On my second, it was to be based on Linux. On my third, it was to be based on Elate from TAO. All three of those shows featured a different person in charge of the Amiga. For this, my forth show, hearing the AmigaOS is being ported to the PowerPC might have sounded like a continuation of the previous shows. While it is a change from what we were led to believe, it also becomes an extension of where we are already headed. Ever since the QNX aanouncement four years ago, there were quite a few people who seemed to be upset at the loss of their long trusted OS. As to whether they will be happy with 4.0 and all of the enhancements, only time will tell. For myself, bring it on, and don't forget the hardware. Bill turned the floor

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over to Alan Redhouse of Eyetech, who gave us our first view of the AmigaOne 1200. It appears that if everything goes as planned, you will be able to buy one in July. Bill stepped back up, and gave us a look at his predecessor's version of the Amiga — the mock-up of the black machine that graced the covers of Amiga magazines, and kept the Amiga community talking for a few months. He then proceeded to show us a Sharp PDA running AmigaDE, due out in Japan later this year. He also showed a few laptops and another PDA running AmigaDE. This I'm sure was to assure us that something was happening despite what the doomsayers may have said or will say.

Sunday offered lots of new questions for people to seek answers to. One presentation offered just such an oppurtunity. Alan Redhouse gave a presentation on the AmigaOne 1200, and there were plenty of people there to ask those question. Mr. Redhouse certainly cleared up many things about the AmigaOne. I was suprised that he felt that the AmigaOne 4000 may never see the light of day. He also had bad feelings about the CyberstormPPC, and felt that AmigaOS 4.0 would never be available for it, but there is always a possibilty that it might get it. There also appears to be no solid standings on the bplan motherboard. Oddly enough, Mr. Redhouse seemed to be the only one willing to discuss bplan and their motherboard. I was disappointed that bplan had no presence at the show that I could see, and there was nothing to see or examine on their effort. WHY?

I also attended a presentation of the sotware package Amiga Forever. Amiga Forever allows the the AmigaOS to run on an ordinary PC. I felt a little attachement for this piece of software, as I had helped to get one of the videos on the CD. The Jay Miner video has been part of our club's library for about 10 years, and Cloanto asked me about including it on the CD. Now everyone who gets Amiga Forever 4.0 gets to see Jay Miner talk about the Amiga.

The show ended with the final drawing for door prizes. Fellow club member Mark C. Stodola got the final call for the Amiga 1200, our second in four trips. On the trip home I had a chance to think about the show. Driving through the countryside at night does that for you. While I enjoyed the show, I was disappointed that there was no AmigaOne up and running, nothing to see from bplan, and it occured to me that there were no Amigas running Voodoo graphics cards at the show — at least none that I saw. One thing is certain, if everything goes according to plan, next year's show will be something. Be sure to check out www.amigamccc.org/gateway2001/index.htm for pictures I took during the show.

...Johnny C. Kitchens

AmigaMCCC News

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May Calendar

May 14 — Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Ctr.
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

May 14 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
Approx. 10:00 pm — TGI Friday's
Loop 820 & Bedford Euless Road

May 17 — Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — SMU Building
Collins Blvd. & International Pkwy, Richardson

May 26 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am